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ABSTRACT

The impact of college admissions policies designed to expand educational opportunity for minority groups is considered. It is suggested that since the Supreme Court decision in the Bakke Case permitted race as a criteria for admission, institutions must articulate their goals in terms of the degree and nature of diversity they hope to achieve. Admissions policies at the undergraduate level are set by the mission of the college, with an interest in the survival of the institution, and by the educational impact brought about by a given admissions policy. With the exception of racial barriers, the courts have backed the right of institutions to make value judgments of the sort that permit continued diversity in admission standards as these standards correspond to diversity of educational mission. A sensitive issue linked to institutional survival is maintaining alumnae loyalty by admitting alumnae children. Some research evidence has suggested that the characteristics of the student body are critical in the learning process that takes place in an institution. It is claimed that it is not possible to train the leaders needed for the future or grope toward answers to racial communications in all white educational communities. There is a need for educational communities to provide an arena for the understanding of different cultures and values and help eliminate stereotypes. In regard to graduate programs, it is suggested that medicine, social work, public health, and education, the people-caring, culturally-sensitive professions, must be particularly sensitive to the mix of their student bodies. Such professionals must be able to listen and hear the person needing assistance, and have respect, knowledge of life styles, and the ability to see each person as an individual. It is proposed that affirmative action principles are essential to the education process itself. (SW)

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THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

FOR THOSE WHO MARCH TO THE TUNE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, THE SUPREME COURT HAS REAFFIRMED THE PARADE ROUTE BY PERMITTING RACE AS A CRITERIA FOR ADMISSIONS. FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO DRAG THEIR FEET, EXCUSES ARE ALSO PROVIDED. (PARENTHETICALLY, IN THE LONG RUN THE COMMENTS OF JUDGE POWELL ON SEX AS DIFFERENTIATED FROM QUESTIONS OF RACE MAY BE THE LEAST DISCUSSED BUT THE MOST LASTING RESULT OF THE BAKKE DECISION.)

TO DATE, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITY HAVE CHOSEN TO INTERPRET THE BAKKE DECISION AS ALLOWING A REAFFIRMATION OF THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO EXPANDED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MINORITY CITIZENS.

JACK PELTASON, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION, WAS QUOTED RECENTLY AS SAYING, "WE (OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION) HAVE VERY FEW PROGRAMS AT THE ADMISSIONS LEVEL THAT WON'T MEET THE CONSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS LAID DOWN BY THE COURTS FIVE-TO-FOUR DECISION."[1]

1 News Notes, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Volume 9, Number 7, July 1978

A GROUP OF ADMISSIONS DIRECTORS WROTE FOR THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD A REVIEW OF THE BAKKE DECISION FOR EACH TYPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION. AFTER DISCUSSING MANY OPEN ADMISSIONS SCHOOLS, THEY WENT ON TO SAY ABOUT THE MORE SELECTIVE INSTITUTIONS: "BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO REFUSE ADMISSION TO SOME ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENTS IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE SOME MINORITIES WITH LOWER QUALIFICATIONS, INSTITUTIONS EMPLOYING COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS PRACTICES ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO COURT ACTION AND MAY EXPECT LEGAL CHALLENGES TO THEIR ADMISSIONS PRACTICES. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT INSTITUTIONS WITH WELL-CONCEIVED PLANS FOR INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF THEIR STUDENT POPULATION, FOR EXAMPLE, A GOAL OF A RACIAL COMPOSITION THAT RESEMBLES THE RACIAL COMPOSITION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA GENERALLY SERVED BY THE INSTITUTION, WILL FIND SUPPORT IN THE COURT'S DECISION ON BAKKE. INSTITUTIONS, THEREFORE, MUST ARTICULATE THEIR GOALS IN TERMS OF THE DEGREE AND NATURE OF DIVERSITY THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE."*

*Implications of the Bakke decision for Undergraduate Admissions Policies and Practices by Stan Berry, Director of Admissions, Washington State University; Eugene Caruthers, Director of Admissions and Records, Meharry Medical College; Edwin H. Cooper, Dean of Admissions and Records, Texas A & M University; Stirling L. Huntley, Director of Admissions and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies California Institute of Technology; Cliff Sjogren, Director of Admissions, University of Michigan; Leo J. Sweeney, Director of Admissions and Registrar, University of Missouri - Kansas City; Lee Wilcox, Associate Director of Academic Services, University of Wisconsin - Madison. July 7, 1978

'I AGREE WITH PRESIDENT PELTASON THAT THE BAKKE CASE REQUIRES LITTLE CHANGE IN ADMISSIONS PRACTICE, AND I AGREE WITH THESE ADMISSIONS EXPERTS THAT THERE MUST BE GREATER CARE IN THE ARTICULATION OF ADMISSIONS OBJECTIVES. IN SUMMARY, HOW INSTITUTIONS CHOOSE TO ACT ON THE BAKKE DECISION IS WHAT COUNTS.

LET ME TRY TO OUTLINE SOME COMMONLY HELD ADMISSIONS OBJECTIVES SO YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHY I AM PLEASED RACE IS VIEWED AS A JUSTIFIABLE CRITERION BY THE COURT AND WHY I BELIEVE IT IS URGENT FOR COLLEGES TO MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ADMISSIONS PROGRAMS.

ADMISSIONS POLICIES AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL ARE SET 1) BY THE MISSION OF THE COLLEGE 2) WITH AN INTEREST IN THE SURVIVAL OF THE INSTITUTION, AND 3) BY THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT BROUGHT ABOUT BY A GIVEN ADMISSIONS POLICY.

AMERICA HAS BEEN PROUD OF THE DIVERSITY OF MISSIONS OF ITS INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING. SOME INSTITUTIONS STATE THAT THEIR MISSION IS AS SPECIFIC AS THE TRAINING OF MISSIONARIES OR ACCOUNTANTS. OTHERS ARE SO AMBITIOUS AS TO ASSERT THEIR DEDICATION TO THE EDUCATION OF THE INTELLECTUALLY CURIOUS OR TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO ASSIST SOCIAL MOBILITY.

THE MOMENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS CHOOSE SUCH DIVERGENT GOALS, THE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA MUST INCLUDE UNQUANTIFIABLE VALUE JUDGMENTS ABOUT PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS. TO DATE WHEN THE MISSION OF AN INSTITUTION RESTRICTED FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOME SEGMENT OF YOUTH BECAUSE OF RACE, THE COURTS AND THE PUBLIC HAVE RAISED QUESTIONS.

WITH THIS EXCEPTION OF RACIAL BARRIERS THE COURTS HAVE BACKED THE RIGHT OF INSTITUTIONS TO MAKE VALUE JUDGMENTS OF THE SORT THAT PERMIT CONTINUED DIVERSITY IN ADMISSION STANDARDS AS THESE STANDARDS CORRESPOND TO DIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL MISSION.

IN A MUCH MORE SENSITIVE AND DIFFICULT AREA ARE THOSE ADMISSIONS POLICIES THAT ARE PERCEIVED AS ASSISTING IN THE PERPETUATION OF AN INSTITUTION THROUGH DEVICES AIMED AT MAINTAINING ALUMNAE LOYALTY WHETHER BY ADMITTING ALUMNAE CHILDREN OR SUPPORTING THE FOOTBALL TEAM. ALL OF HIGHER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IS SENSITIVE TO SUCH ISSUES BECAUSE SURVIVAL IS DEPENDENT UPON GOODWILL.

FINALLY AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, AS IT RELATES TO THE BAKKE CASE, THERE IS AN INCREASING RECOGNITION BY ADMISSIONS OFFICERS OF THE IMPACT OF ONE'S STUDENT PEERS ON THE EDUCATION PROCESS ITSELF. THIS IS NOT A

NEW IDEA. USING A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF WELLESLEY HISTORY AS AN EXAMPLE, WELLESLEY FROM THE BEGINNING HAS SOUGHT DIVERSITY BY THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT FAMILY INCOME LEVELS. HENRY FOWLE DURANT, THE FOUNDER OF WELLESLEY COLLEGE IN 1875, EXPECTED HIS INSTITUTION TO EDUCATE TEACHERS FOR THE FRONTIER AND TO TRAIN MISSIONARIES. HE WAS SENSITIVE TO THE NEED TO ESTABLISH THE APPROPRIATE COLLEGE MILIEU TO PRODUCE WOMEN DEDICATED TO SUCH CONCERNS. HE THEREFORE SET ABOUT THE TASK OF ESTABLISHING SUBSTANTIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS AND REMEDIAL COURSES TO GET THOSE WITH LIMITED ACADEMIC TRAINING UP TO COLLEGE LEVEL.

THE EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE OF A BROAD GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AND THE DESIRABILITY OF THE INCLUSION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS WITHIN A PREDOMINANTLY AMERICAN STUDENT POPULATION ARE COMMONLY HELD ADMISSIONS OBJECTIVES ACCLAIMED FOR EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE.

MORE RECENTLY, PROFESSOR NEWCOMB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ON STUDENTS' VALUES. IN THE COURSE OF THEIR STUDIES, THEY FIND THAT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON VALUES RESULTS FROM THE INTERCHANGE BETWEEN STUDENTS NOT IN THE FORMAL CLASSROOM SETTING. ONE CONCLUDES, THEREFORE, THAT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY ARE CRITICAL IN THE

LEARNING PROCESS THAT TAKES PLACE IN AN INSTITUTION.

TELEVISION, MIGRATION--A NUMBER OF FACTORS ARE COMBINING TO MAKE THE AMERICAN WHITE COMMUNITY INCREASINGLY HOMOGENEOUS, THUS GIVING LESS SIGNIFICANCE TO GEOGRAPHIC DISPERSION AS A CRITERION FOR BRINGING DIVERSITY OF VALUES AND EXPERIENCES INTO THE AMERICAN STUDENT BODY. YET FOR AMERICA THE TASK OF CREATING A SOCIETY THAT CAN ACCOMMODATE AND BUILD ON THE STRENGTH OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY LOOMS EVER MORE IMPORTANT. UNLESS WE BUILD TOWARD RACIAL PEACE, WE INVITE CATASTROPHE. WE NEED CREATIVE, UNDERSTANDING WHITE AND MINORITY LEADERS. THE NEED FOR RACIAL UNDERSTANDING AT HOME IS EVIDENT. IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA, WHERE WHITES ARE THE MINORITY, THE ELIMINATION OF AMERICAN RACISM IS EQUALLY URGENT.

ONE CANNOT TRAIN THE LEADERS NEEDED FOR THE FUTURE OR GROPE TOWARD ANSWERS TO RACIAL COMMUNICATIONS IN ALL WHITE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES. EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES CAN PRODUCE FUTURE LEADERS ONLY IF WE PROVIDE AN ARENA FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT CULTURES AND VALUES--ONLY IF WE PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT SMASHES STEREOTYPES. EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES OF RACE ARE EFFECTIVELY DEALT WITH AS A CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS PART OF THE COLLEGIATE EDUCATIONAL AGENDA ONLY IF THERE IS REPRESENTATION

OF PLUMBING. THE INCLUSION OF BLACKS AS PLUMBERS IS A STEP TOWARD A MORE EQUITABLE SOUNDER DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY AND THE ACQUAINTANCE WITH BLACKS AS PROFESSIONAL EQUALS MAY ASSIST A WHITE TO ELIMINATE STEREOTYPED THINKING. BUT PIPES KNOW NO COLOR. CULTURAL VARIATION INFLUENCES LITTLE THE TREATMENT FOR CLOGGED SINKS.

MEDICINE, SOCIAL WORK, PUBLIC HEALTH, EDUCATION--THE "PEOPLE CARING" CULTURALLY SENSITIVE PROFESSIONS MUST, IN MY JUDGMENT, BE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THE MIX OF THEIR STUDENT BODY.

IN "PEOPLE CARING" OCCUPATIONS, ONE MUST BE ABLE TO LISTEN AND <u>HEAR</u> THE PERSON NEEDING ASSISTANCE. RESPECT, KNOWLEDGE OF LIFE STYLES, AND THE ABILITY TO SEE EACH PERSON AS AN INDIVIDUAL WITHOUT STEREOTYPE ARE FIRST INGREDIENTS TO <u>HEARING</u>, AND THEREFORE ASSISTANCE. WORKING CLOSELY WITH MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS DURING THE TRAINING PROCESS MAY BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE VEHICLE FOR ASSISTING OTHERS TO HEAR.

TO UNDERSCORE THIS POINT, LET ME BE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FOR A MOMENT. IN THE MID-60'S I FOUND MYSELF INVOLVED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS WITH HEALTH CARE DELIVERY. AN OFTEN REPEATED THEME OF THOSE DELIVERING THE SERVICES WAS THAT PATIENTS DIDN'T FOLLOW ORDERS OR COMMUNITIES DIDN'T UNDERSTAND.

WITHIN THE STUDENT BODY OF THOSE FROM ETHNICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS, NOT JUST THE STUDENT BODY BUT THE CURRICULUM, THE FACULTY, THE SUPPORT STAFF--ALL MUST REFLECT THE URGENCY WITH WHICH THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO THE AMERICAN DILEMMA.

SO FAR MY FOCUS HAS BEEN ON UNDERGRADUATE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. THESE SAME POINTS ARE EQUALLY APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROFESSIONAL AND GRADUATE SCHOOLS. I WOULD, HOWEVER, CHOOSE TO AMEND MY STATEMENT SLIGHTLY FOR THESE PARTICULAR EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE MISSION OF THESE SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS ARE OBVIOUSLY APT TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, REQUIRE MORE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT FOR TRAINING, AND BE MORE DIRECTLY INFLUENCED BY THE MARKET CONDITIONS FOR A GIVEN OCCUPATION. PUT ANOTHER WAY, THE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE HAS FEWER CONSTRAINTS ON NUMBERS THAN THE PLUMBERS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM OR THE MEDICAL SCHOOL.

SECOND, THE NEED TO INCLUDE MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS MAY BE MORE URGENT IN ONE FIELD THAN ANOTHER BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE TRAINING PROVIDED.

LET ME ILLUSTRATE WHAT I MEAN BY EXAMPLES. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS HAVE ACCESS TO THE HIGH SKILLED, WELL PAID JOBS

THE RECIPIENTS OF THE CARE ON THE OTHER HAND COMPLAINED THAT DIRECTIVES WERE GIVEN WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OR UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE STYLES, AVAILABLE FOODS AND RESOURCES, OR OTHER INGREDIENTS CRITICAL TO SUCCESSFUL CARE.

TO A GREAT EXTENT, THESE MISUNDERSTANDINGS RESULTED FROM QUESTIONS NEVER ASKED, ANSWERS NOT FULLY UNDERSTOOD OR HEARD, AND A MANNER THAT INTIMIDATED. THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR THESE SPECIALISTS HAD OFFERED FEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCE THAT WOULD SENSITIZE THE FUTURE PROFESSIONALS TO SUCH UNDERSTANDING.

IN ONE CASE WHERE I FOUND MYSELF ON THE VISITING COMMITTEE FOR A SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, A COMMITTEE OF US CONCERNED WITH THIS SEVERE COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEM CONCLUDED THAT FOR THE SELF-EDUCATION PROCESS OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WE WOULD RECOMMEND THE HAND TAILORING OF INCOMING CLASSES IN THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO INCLUDE RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES, WOMEN WHO WERE RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER RAISING A FAMILY, BRIGHT FRESHLY TRAINED YOUTH, AND PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN IN OTHER AREAS OF MEDICAL CARE. AS YOU CAN SEE, SUCH A MEDICAL ADMISSIONS POLICY WOULD PROVIDE PROFESSIONALS MORE APT TO

SERVICE MINORITY GROUPS, BUT OUR RECOMMENDATION WAS ON THE BELIEF THAT SUCH AN ADMISSIONS POLICY ALSO WOULD IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS ITSELF FOR ALL INVOLVED. THE COFFEE BREAK WOULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR INSIGHTS AND GET PEOPLE BEYOND STEREOTYPIC THINKING. THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF MINORITY MEMBERS WOULD HAVE THE AFFECT OF CHANGING THE CURRICULUM.

IN SUMMARY, WHETHER ONE SPEAKS OF GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL OR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION, I SEE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PRINCIPLES AS INEXORABLY INTERTWINED WITH THE EDUCATION PROCESS ITSELF.

THE BAKKE COURT DECISION PERMITS US TO GET ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATION FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

Barbara W. Newell
September 13, 1978
San Diego, California